

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter in this application.

Applicants have added new claims 11-20. Support for claims 11-13 and 18-20 can be found at page 3, lines 16-31 of the original specification. Support for claims 14-17 can be found on page 2, line 11 to page 3, line 31 of the original specification.

The Examiner objected to claim 1 because of an informality. Applicant has amended claim 1 to correct the informality. Accordingly, Applicant requests the objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. The Examiner has rejected claims 1-10 because the phrase “characterized in that” renders the claim indefinite. Applicant has amended claims 1-10 to include the transition “wherein” to indicate that the limitations following the phrase are part of the claimed invention. Therefore, Applicant requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-4, 8, and 9, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Wang (U.S. Patent No. 5,933,900), hereinafter “Wang”.

Regarding claim 1, Applicant claims “a scratching means (41)” for removing liquid and particles from the belt. The Examiner alleges that elements 78, 79 in Wang disclose a scratching means. However, Wang only discloses wringer rollers 78, 79 for wringing a wet belt. There is no disclosure in Wang that these rollers perform any scratching. Further, Applicant has amended claim 1 to more clearly invoke 35 U.S.C. 112, 6th paragraph. Therefore, the claims must be given their broadest reasonable interpretation, in light of and consistent with the written description of the invention in the application or equivalents. See *In re Donaldson*, 16 F.3d at

1194, 29 USPQ2d at 1850. Accordingly, the Office may not disregard the structure disclosed in the specification corresponding to such language when rendering a patentability determination. See MPEP 2181. Thus, Wang fails to disclose a scratching means as defined by the written description and as claimed in claim 1.

Thus, Wang fails to teach every limitation of claim 1 as required to maintain a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b). Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 and the respective dependent claims 2-10 are not anticipated by the cited reference and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 5-6 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) over Wang in view of Lynn (U.S. Patent No. 5,203,047), hereinafter “Lynn”. For at least the following reasons, the Examiner’s rejection is respectfully traversed. The asserted combination of Wang in view of Lynn, independently or in combination, does not teach or suggest all features of the claimed invention.

Claims 5, 6 and 10 depend either directly or indirectly on claim 1. Therefore, Wang fails to disclose a scratching means for removing particles, as required in claim 1. Additionally, this deficiency of Wang is not taught or suggested in the disclosure of Lynn. Therefore, even if Wang were combined with Lynn, every limitation of claim 1 would not be taught, suggested, or otherwise rendered obvious or predictable by the resulting combination.

Accordingly, as claims 5, 6 and 10 depend from claim 1, and as claim 1 is not rendered obvious or predictable by the resulting combination, claims 5, 6 and 10 are not rendered obvious or predictable by the resulting combination.

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) over Wang in view of Lynn and in further view of Chupin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,918,778), hereinafter “Chupin”. For at least the following reasons, the Examiner’s rejection is respectfully traversed. The asserted combination

of Wang in view of Lynn, and in further view of Chupin, independently or in combination, does not teach or suggest all features of the claimed invention.

Claim 7 depends indirectly on claim 1. Therefore, as Wang and Lynn fails to disclose a scratching means for removing particles required in claim 1, this deficiency of Wang and Lynn is not taught or suggested in the disclosure of Chupin. Thus, even if Wang were combined with Lynn and Chupin, every limitation of claim 1 would not be taught, suggested, or otherwise rendered obvious or predictable by the resulting combination. As a result, Wang, Lynn and Chupin fail to render claim 7 obvious.

Regarding claims 14-20, Wang fails to disclose structure relating to the leg of the scratching instrument. Therefore, Applicant believes that the new claims are neither anticipated nor obvious in light of the prior art of record.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned agent to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. ABE-37256.

Respectfully submitted,

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